

I note that, last week, the White House honored Tamara Brown from Hamburg, New York, as a champion of change for her work with young women and their parents and teachers.

Seven years ago, Tamara founded Tech Savvy, a program using fun and innovation to inspire students to explore their talents in science and math and to pursue our Nation's careers of the future. In bringing together industry, academic and community leaders, Tamara has helped so many young western New Yorkers discover their full potential. She has helped prepare them for some of our Nation's highest-paying and most competitive career fields.

I applaud Tamara Brown for helping girls from western New York train for careers in science, and I congratulate her on this wonderful recognition.

#### BIG GOVERNMENT IS THE TOP CONCERN FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Some in this Chamber believe that the answer to our Nation's problems is more government, that we need more unchecked spending, more unelected bureaucrats, and more rules and regulation in our everyday lives.

Yet, in a Gallup Poll just this week, 64 percent of Americans across the political spectrum responded that their biggest fear and the greatest threat to our country is Big Government. They've seen, just as I've seen, that burdensome rules and regulation and out-of-control spending and debt bring us nothing but high unemployment and an uncertain future for our kids and our grandkids.

That's why the House Republicans have been working tirelessly this year to pass pro-growth, pro-jobs bills that will restore the confidence our Nation's job creators need to put Americans back to work again. Yet nearly 30 of these bills, which would restore reasonable regulation, reduce spending and create a smaller, less intrusive Federal Government, continue to languish over in the Senate, which still refuses to address the needs of unemployed Americans.

We can't wait. Pass these jobs bills so that Americans can start working again and so that America can move forward.

#### IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, CHANUKAH, AND KWANZA, LET'S PASS A CLEAN BILL

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. This year and every time the Democrats have tried to do the right thing for the American people, the Republicans say "no" unless they add their poison pills. In the past, that might have led to negotia-

tions that might have ended in a bipartisan solution—but not so today.

Today, Republicans are trying to force us to accept the Keystone pipeline before we are sure it is safe for the communities it will traverse and won't make the air we breathe dirtier than it already is. The President is right to wait until those things are assessed. In their zeal to kill the Affordable Care Act, they want to slash the Public Health and Prevention Fund and other programs that keep people healthy and reduce health care costs for families and our country.

Democrats have been calling for passing our Make It in America and other jobs bills, but the Republicans insist on jobs that damage the public health and on killing jobs in the only sector that is growing—health care. Because they have not helped the recovery, our fellow Americans still need the payroll tax deduction and unemployment insurance and a fix of doctors' Medicare reimbursements so that they can continue services to the millions of Americans on Medicare.

Let's do a clean bill in the spirit of Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanza.

A big "welcome home" to our troops. I thank them all for their service.

#### TROOPS RETURNING FROM IRAQ

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our brave men and women returning home from Iraq, especially Rhode Island's Company D, 126 TAC.

Thank you for your tremendous dedication, selfless efforts, and courageous service to our country.

Tragically, thousands of our servicemembers have made the ultimate sacrifice, and I join all Americans in honoring their service and sacrifice and those of their families.

It is because of you that we are able to enjoy the great freedoms, privileges, and rights we have here at home.

With the homecoming of our troops from Iraq, we must keep our promise to our veterans. On the battlefield, the military pledge is to leave no soldier behind. As a Nation, let it be our pledge that, when they return home, we leave no veteran behind. We must do everything we can to honor them by guaranteeing they have the help they need in finding employment, in securing housing, and in accessing quality health care.

The men and women who have served our country demonstrate the ideals of bravery and patriotism. Now let us work together to create a future worthy of their service.

#### REPUBLICAN EFFORTS TO CUT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

(Mr. PETERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose Republican efforts to slash unemployment benefits.

Earlier this week, House Republicans passed legislation that would cut 40 weeks of unemployment benefits and impose new hurdles for Americans relying on this critical lifeline. With five job seekers in the United States for every available job, the average time it takes an unemployed worker to find a new job is 10 months. Instead of passing the American Jobs Act and getting our Nation's long-term unemployed back to work, Republicans are cutting benefits which millions of Americans rely on for groceries, utilities, and rent.

The Republican plan would hurt workers who are having difficulty in finding new jobs and would pull billions of dollars out of our still-recovering economy. Poverty is at its highest level since 1993; but unemployment benefits kept over 3 million Americans, including 1 million children, out of poverty in 2010; and now Republicans are fighting to gut this necessary lifeline.

During this holiday season, when millions of Americans are worried about being able to pay their rent, I urge my colleagues to oppose slashing unemployment benefits.

#### BENNY COCKERHAM, III

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our servicemen and -women who end their mission in Iraq.

Like many, I woke this morning to the End of Mission ceremony, and I thought about Corporal Benny "Gray" Cockerham, III of North Carolina. He was the son of my good friends Ben and Jill Cockerham. He lost his life at age 21 in al-Anbar province in Iraq on October 21, 2005.

Like his father, he joined the Marine Corps in service to this Nation, and he is survived by Ben and Jill; his wife, Amanda; and his brother, Adam.

And like the 4,486 other men and women who lost their lives in Iraq, the mission has ended.

I want to pay tribute today to all of our servicemen and -women for their service and for their sacrifice and especially to my friends Ben and Jill for the loss of your son. I remember when he was born on June 28, as we shared a birthday, and I want you to know that the Nation is ever grateful for all your sacrifice and for your service.

#### HONORING UNILEVER NATIONAL PARKS CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in honor of our troops who served honorably not only in Iraq but who continue to serve throughout the world in

protecting our freedoms. They've done a job well done.

In addition, I rise today to honor the Unilever National Parks Congressional Internship program in partnership with the Student Conservation Association.

For 11 years, this program has engaged the next generation of conservation leaders by facilitating internships in national parks and on Capitol Hill for 63 top-notch young professionals. The program has served as an important stepping stone in their public policy and conservation careers.

It is with great sadness that this program has come to an end; but I have had the privilege, along with my colleagues, in working with seven of the Unilever congressional interns in my office.

I commend the Unilever and Student Conservation Association for sponsoring such an innovative program, and I thank all of the interns for their dedication and service. I wish them all the best in their future careers as they add value to the fabric of our Nation.

□ 1230

#### REPUBLICAN OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED TAX CUT

(Ms. CLARKE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. For the third time this calendar year, we are facing the real likelihood of a government shutdown. And why? Because, Mr. Speaker, of all things, Republican opposition to a tax cut proposal. The Republican majority, which has spent the last 49 weeks of the American people's time protecting tax cuts for millionaires, multimillionaires, and billionaires, does not want to extend the same courtesy to the struggling middle class.

It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that the people's House cannot agree to pass commonsense legislation that benefits the majority of the American people without including poison pills that ensure the air we breathe is clean, our water is safe to drink, and our seniors have access to quality health care.

Unfortunately, this should not come as a surprise to the American people who have watched the Republican-led 112th Congress unleash an all-out assault on our middle class and aspiring middle class and the most vulnerable amongst us.

Mr. Speaker, during these tough times, we cannot afford to pass partisan legislation that toys with and diminishes the livelihoods of the American people, that harms our economic recovery efforts, and removes environmental safeguards. We must put politics aside, pass commonsense legislation that helps the American people, and not use them as political bargaining chips.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome home America's service-

women and -men and thank you for your service to our Nation.

#### EDUCATION

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, first, I certainly want to thank our troops and their families for their sacrifice as we exit from Iraq.

It is my honor now to continue to bring the voices of my constituents to this floor. And the following is from Howard Tenenbaum. He is a science teacher in La Jolla, and I believe his class is watching today. He sent me his opinion on education:

"Weighing a pig every day doesn't get you a fatter pig. And annual testing of all students in all subject areas, without it impacting their grade, has not resulted in smarter students. It has made our students lose their intrinsic desire to learn and added an expensive layer of bureaucracy to an already administratively top-heavy system.

"This is especially true for science education. It is clear that the current accountability system has failed. Our students, parents, and their teachers are being held hostage to this failed system. When was the last time you were forced to take an exam, asked to do your 'best,' and knew that the result wouldn't affect how you were being evaluated?"

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Howard for bringing to the House his thoughts on education and this question to our floor.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, December 15, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 15, 2011 at 9:22 a.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 1892.

That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 515.

Appointments:  
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 1:15 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 1:15 p.m.

□ 1315

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND) at 1 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

#### WELFARE INTEGRITY AND DATA IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3659) to reauthorize the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3659

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Welfare Integrity and Data Improvement Act".

#### SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title.
- Sec. 2. Table of contents.
- Sec. 3. Extension of program.
- Sec. 4. Data standardization.
- Sec. 5. Spending policies for assistance under State TANF programs.
- Sec. 6. Technical corrections.

#### SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.

(a) FAMILY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.—Section 403(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "each of fiscal years 1996" and all that follows through "2003" and inserting "fiscal year 2012";

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) by inserting "(as in effect just before the enactment of the Welfare Integrity and Data Improvement Act)" after "this paragraph" the 1st place it appears; and

(B) by inserting "(as so in effect)" after "this paragraph" the 2nd place it appears; and

(3) in subparagraph (C), by striking "2003" and inserting "2012".

(b) HEALTHY MARRIAGE PROMOTION AND RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD GRANTS.—Section 403(a)(2)(D) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(2)(D)) is amended by striking "2011" and inserting "2012".

(c) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT REQUIREMENT.—Section 409(a)(7) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 609(a)(7)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "fiscal year" and all that follows through "2013" and inserting "a fiscal year"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)(ii)—

(A) by striking "for fiscal years 1997 through 2012,"; and